

# The DNA of successful ideas and concepts

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## **Abstract:**

The identification of potentially successful ideas is a key challenge for scholars and practitioners of innovation, especially in the context of new product development. Extant literature suggests that the idea itself may be an important variable for explaining the success of ideas. However, there has been a relative paucity of innovation and marketing research investigating the nature of the idea further. We address this gap with two main contributions. First, we develop a configurational theory about the idea itself (i.e. the “idea DNA”), which suggests that idea’s compositional features and their configuration may be strong predictors of success. Second, we develop a new network-based methodology that aims at extracting the DNA of successful ideas, thereby providing the opportunity of identifying further promising ideas in a given domain. We validate this methodology using a dataset from an idea competition in the consumer goods sector. The evidence suggests that an idea’s features and meta-features derived from network analysis can be strong predictors of success. Our methodology lends itself to practical adoption by managers to improve existing innovation processes.